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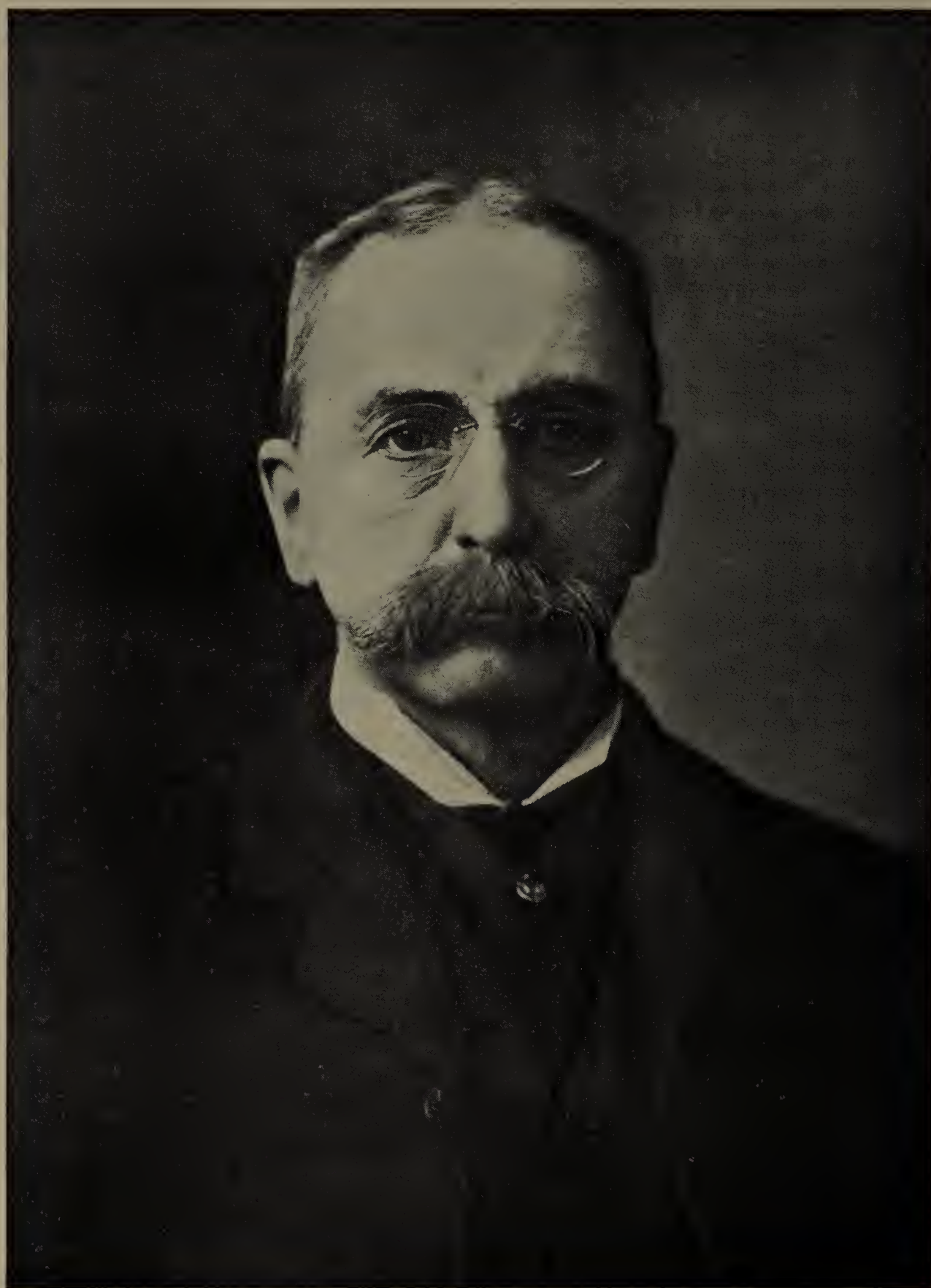
WILLIAM HENRY CARMALT











*W. H. Carmalt*

1836 - 1929

## WILLIAM H. CARMALT

*"Strong to the end, a man of men, from out the strife he passed."*

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*"For him no wail of sorrow, but a pæan full and strong!"*

William Henry Carmalt was born at Friendsville, Susquehanna County, Pennsylvania, on August 3, 1836. His parents, Caleb and Sarah Price Carmalt, were members of the Society of Friends. His early education was obtained in Friends' Boarding Schools in Westchester, Pennsylvania, in Philadelphia, in Moorestown, New Jersey, and in Alexandria, Virginia. After leaving school he stayed at home on his father's farm for several years. His father wished him to study law, for which he had no inclination. Instead, he left for New Haven and spent the year 1854-55 studying civil engineering with William A. Norton, who was the first professor in the Yale School of Engineering. The Chemical and Engineering Schools joined to form the Yale Scientific School in that year.

The profession of civil engineering did not satisfy him, and in 1857, at the age of twenty-one, he entered the private medical school of Doctors Morell Wyman and Jeffries Wyman, at Cambridge, where he remained for two years. He then went to New York to become the private pupil of Dr. John C. Dalton, Professor of Physiology at the College of Physicians and Surgeons, and from this school he was graduated in 1861.

After graduation Dr. Carmalt received an appointment as interne at St. Luke's Hospital and on completion of his service there, he opened an office on 23rd Street, near Fifth Avenue, engaging in general practice, but paying considerable attention to ophthalmology. At about this time he was in service in the Civil War. He talked little about his war experiences. Members of his family have heard him say that he was for a time at Fort Monroe, and it is known that in 1862 he served as a surgeon on the army transport *St. Marks*.

On December 8, 1863 he married Laura Woolsey Johnson of Stratford, Connecticut, a descendant of Samuel Johnson, the first president of Kings College in New York, and of his son William Samuel Johnson, first president of Columbia College. He then



moved to 69 West 45th Street, where he lived until he left New York in 1869.

In 1863, shortly after beginning practice, he was appointed Clinical Assistant, then Assistant Surgeon, and later Surgeon to the New York Eye Infirmary. In 1866 he was appointed Ophthalmic Surgeon to the Charity Hospital on Blackwell's Island. In 1867 he was appointed Assistant Commissioner, and in 1868, Commissioner of the New York State Agricultural Society, and it is evident that this appointment was made, in part at least, in order to afford him an opportunity for studying abortion in cows. Upon this subject he published two papers.

In 1870, during the Franco-Prussian War, Dr. Carmalt resigned his hospital positions in New York and went to Germany to study. He spent eight or nine months with Samuel Stricker of Vienna working in experimental pathology. From Vienna he went to Breslau to study cancer with Waldeyer. Having decided upon a longer stay in Germany than he had at first planned, he came back to get his family and returned to Breslau just after the close of the Franco-Prussian War. Soon after, Waldeyer went to Strassburg with Von Recklinghausen and Dr. Carmalt followed him, remaining there until 1874, when he started for home, stopping in Paris for two months.

The next year was spent at the home of his wife in Stratford, studying, but not practicing. In 1876 he moved to New Haven and started practice as an ophthalmologist at 18 College Street. After a few months he was appointed Lecturer, and in 1879 Professor, of Ophthalmology and Otology in the Medical Institution of Yale College. In 1881 he moved to 87 Elm Street where he lived until after his retirement from practice, when he moved to 261 Saint Ronan Street.

In 1881 Francis Bacon resigned, and David P. Smith was appointed to succeed him as Professor of Surgery. He died before he occupied the chair, and Dr. Carmalt was appointed Professor of the Principles and Practice of Surgery. He was at the same time appointed Attending Surgeon to the New Haven Hospital, and elected a member of its Board of Directors. He resigned as Professor and as Attending Surgeon in 1907, but remained on the Board of Directors until his death, and was a member of the Prudential Committee of the Hospital from 1880 to 1894. He was President of

the New Haven County Medical Association for the year 1884-1885, Councillor of that Society and Chairman of the Council of the Connecticut State Medical Society from 1910 to 1929, President of the New Haven (City) Medical Association in 1888, and President of the Connecticut State Medical Society in 1904. He was elected an Honorary Member of the New Haven (City) Medical Association in 1928.

Regardless of his own health, because he had never needed to regard it, Dr. Carmalt for two days neglected the warning of an overstrained heart, which came to him on March 8, 1929. Thereafter, he was confined to his room, free from physical suffering, until he died peacefully on July 17, 1929.

Dr. Carmalt's wide and profound influence in the field of medical education and practice for the last half century is indicated in tributes from his associates.

He became influential in the affairs of the Yale Medical School and New Haven Hospital very shortly after his connection with them was established. In one way or another, he was connected with both institutions for fifty-three years, and they were his constant care. His influence in the formation and execution of plans for the development of the Medical School and Hospital and for uniting them into one institution can hardly be over-estimated though it has not been widely known. After his retirement from active service he was loyal in the support of his successors and of the plans and experiments which were being made for the development of the school.

With his students Dr. Carmalt was gruff, but he was always fair and was especially attached to those who had independence enough not to allow him to bully them. They always referred to him as "Bill" in a tone which showed admiration and respect,—and perhaps a little awe. The admiration and respect grew stronger as the years passed and the awe was replaced by affection. These sentiments were expressed at a large dinner given him in March 1908, after he retired from teaching. He was an excellent clinical teacher but not particularly good in formal lectures. He disliked writing, and often tried to arrange what he had written on scattered sheets as he lectured. There was rarely any attempt



at careful composition. On the other hand, the papers which he read before medical societies and published were carefully prepared, and well expressed. As Dean Smith says: "His didactic work was done with his usual punctilious attention, but it did not interest him as did the clinical work. I think he enjoyed most his clinic at the old dispensary."

Sometimes a few words expressed his ideas more clearly than did his lectures. No lecture could have given a clearer conception of his view of the physician's duty to see things through than he gave in two words. It was late in the afternoon during an operation which the class was expected to attend. As the six o'clock whistle blew some of the students started to leave for dinner. He looked up, grunted in a stage whisper, "Damned mechanics!", and went on with the operation.

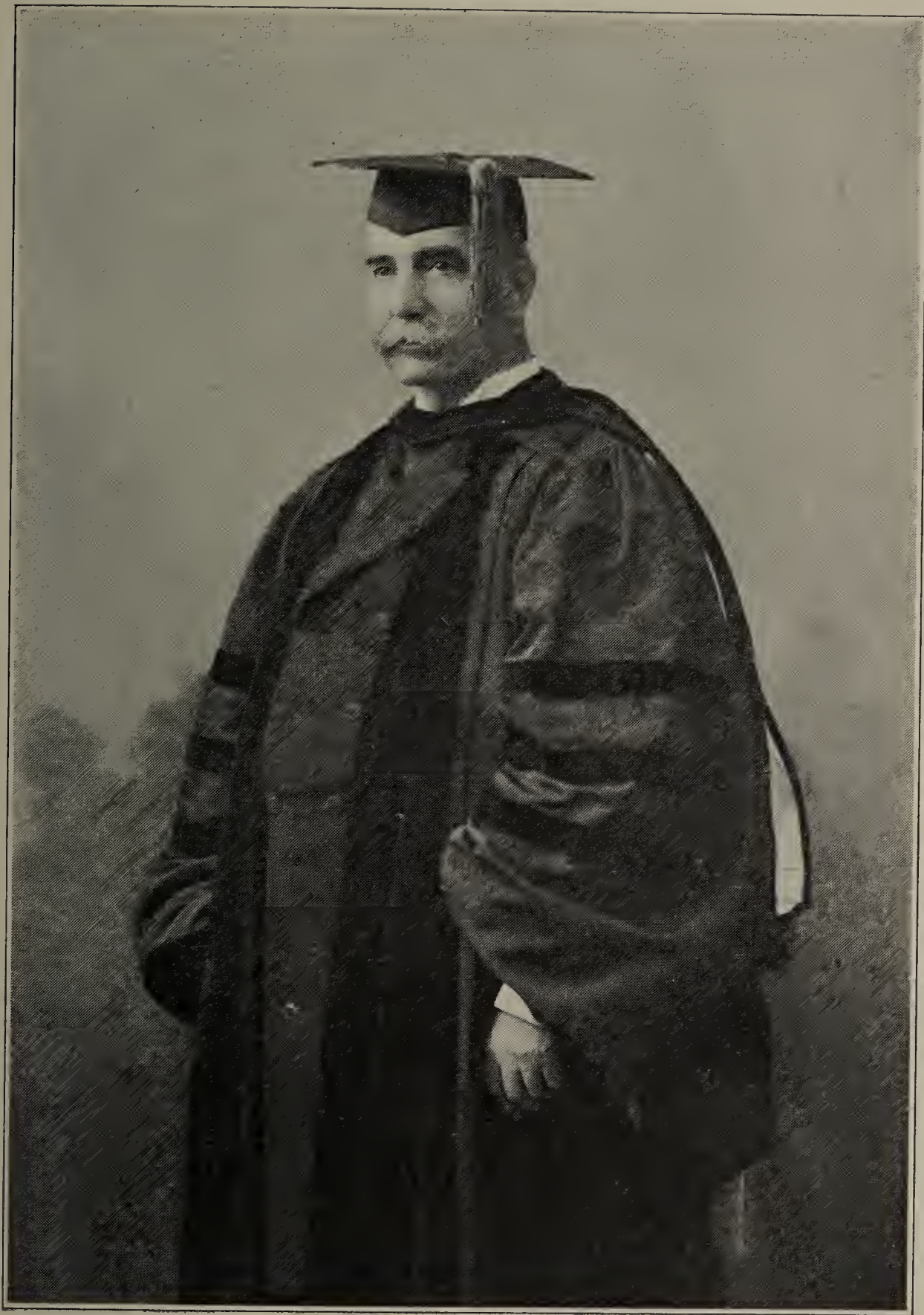
Of his influence during the period of his active connection with the Medical School, in his report for the year 1906-7 Dean Herbert E. Smith said:

"Professor Carmalt's connection with the Medical School began in 1876, when he was appointed Lecturer on Ophthalmology and Otology. In 1879 he was made a professor in the same branches, and in 1881 he succeeded David P. Smith, M.D., as Professor of the Principles and Practice of Surgery. He has been, therefore, in the continuous active service of the School for thirty-one years. This period has included the most active years in the history of the School, and has been a period of substantial progress, to achieve which many decisive steps have had to be taken. In all the work of this period Professor Carmalt has taken a leading part. In the many questions of policy which have brought discussions into the meetings of the Faculty, and in the troublesome questions of appointments, his actions have always been guided by his desire to promote the real welfare of the School even when the result has at times disappointed the ambitions of his personal friends. His attitude has ever been that of a faithful soldier who sees his duty and does it without thought of the personal result."

His work for School and Hospital continued for many more years as a member and president of the Board of Directors of the New Haven Hospital. Of this period, one of his colleagues on the Board, Professor Henry W. Farnam, says:

"My associations with Dr. Carmalt go back to 1880 when I became a director of the General Hospital Society of Connecticut.









"We served together for six years on the Prudential Committee and have co-operated in many ways as Directors and officers almost to the present time. Dr. Carmalt was most faithful in attending to his duties as a director, in addition to carrying on the work of surgeon, teacher and member of the medical board. I am not competent to speak of his professional achievements, but among the many services of an administrative nature which he rendered during the long period of his directorship, there are four which seem to me to be especially permanent in value:

"First; Many years ago he co-operated with Doctors Smith and Thacher in securing for Yale University the land on Cedar Street now occupied by the Yale School of Medicine, and thus paved the way for the development of the great institution of human welfare which is now being developed on a large scale around the hospital.

"Second; He was instrumental in bringing about the contract, made with Yale University in 1913, which inaugurated the full-time system.

"Third; He played an important part in locating and erecting the buildings of the William Wirt Winchester Tuberculosis Hospital.

"Fourth; He was active in the reorganization of the administration of the hospital in 1919, which, I believe, saved it from threatened bankruptcy.

"Only those who have known the hospital from the inside and have taken part in the discussions of its Board of Directors and its committees can realize the extent of Dr. Carmalt's services.

"I am glad to pay this brief tribute to an old and valued friend and I feel under a very personal obligation to him for one of his last services. He wrote, at my request, the history of the last fifty years of the hospital for our centenary in 1926. He was then in his ninetieth year. His strength was waning. Yet he undertook and carried through the task with vigor and accuracy and has left a record of lasting value to future generations."

Of his interest in the School of Nursing, Mrs. Virginia H. Curtis wrote him:

"I and my children have been your patients, and, besides, my long connection with the training school made me familiar

with your work in the hospital, and your devotion to its interests. I have often thanked you in my heart for what you were to the patients and to our nurses. If there were times when you inspired the latter with a wholesome awe, I am sure they always realized that you were truly their friend, and that in any perplexity or trouble they might turn to you with confidence."

Of Dr. Carmalt as an operator and clinician Dr. Verdi says: "As a surgeon Dr. Carmalt hated ostentation and pretense. He was absolutely honest and frank in acknowledging a mistake or error. Possessing these traits of character no one could approach him without a profound feeling of respect. In the class-room, as a teacher, his handsome personality and rugged character commanded the attention of every student. His outstanding scientific work in surgery was on the pathology of tumors, and he was one of the first to call attention to the epithelial origin of cancer and the connective tissue origin of sarcoma.

"On ward-rounds he showed intense interest in his scientific search for facts. In making a diagnosis he showed surpassing ability, and held as paramount the patient's welfare and recovery.

"His outward appearance of gruffness concealed a sympathetic heart which was only shown to his most intimate associates. In the operating room, his clean character and personality dominated the whole atmosphere. He possessed that rare quality of the great surgeon known as surgical judgment. His work was thorough and he shouldered all responsibility. He was a bold surgeon, but cautious, in that he did not let his courage obscure his effort to save life. His wide reading and broad foundation in pathology and his resourcefulness, aided by keen powers of observation, helped to make him always the master of any situation. His scrupulous punctuality could never tolerate tardiness or delay in any person. He was never given to flattery, but his eloquent silence indicated approval. His inspiring influence as a teacher and consultant, and his rare character as a man and friend of the truth will be remembered by his friends, colleagues and a large number of pupils."

The Medical School and Hospital seemed to be Dr. Carmalt's chief interest, or perhaps it would be better to say his first interest. If this was so, it was because he felt the importance of the proper training of the medical student, and realized that without common sense, sound education, honesty, and the purpose to be of service,



a physician is a disgrace to his profession and a curse to society. There were many things he despised, but none so much as a physician lacking these qualifications. But his interest in, and influence on, the profession only began in the Medical School and Hospital. It quickly extended.

Dr. Carmalt soon became a well-known figure throughout the state. He was present at all medical meetings and took an active and leading part in them. He was President in 1905, and for the last nineteen years of his life Chairman of the Council of the Connecticut State Medical Society. Of his influence on medicine in Connecticut, Dr. Bradstreet, who has known him from the earliest days of his practice, says:

"The influence of Dr. Carmalt upon the practice of medicine in Connecticut has been great.

"When I first knew him he limited himself to diseases of the eye and ear. Later he enlarged his field to that of general surgery. This reversal of the usual custom of narrowing the scope of one's activities is illustrative of that breadth of his influence. He was always enlarging his activities.

"He did much for hospital betterment; he was active in developing the training of nurses; had much to do with establishing public clinics, and it would be difficult to pick out any department of hygiene or community health that has not received valuable help from him. The result of these efforts extends throughout the state.

"The period of his life, covering as it does that of the most remarkable progress in all branches of the healing art, offered him the opportunity to be one of the Apostles of Science. It was his to be one of the interpreters to many, of the better way to contend with disease, and to prevent it.

"The prestige he had gained as a leading ophthalmologist gave him hearty welcome in any gathering of leading physicians, and his counsel was sought in the establishing of many important organizations.

"The prominence so well-deserved could not but be reflected somewhat upon the entire medical profession of Connecticut to which he was constantly loyal.

"This loyalty to his profession, added to his devotion to humanity in general, won the respect and affection so noticeable in any gathering of medical men in the state. By precept and example he impressed obligation to duty upon his pupils and upon all associated with him. He detested makeshifts, subterfuges and shirking. His presence in the many medical meetings he attended was always felt.

"The medical profession of Connecticut has come a long way upward and forward during the long life of Dr. Carmalt, and it is pleasing and fitting to pay tribute to him for his continuous and untiring help in building the agencies that seek to increase health and happiness."

To this statement should be added the remarks of Dr. Steiner, who, after Dr. Carmalt's resignation, succeeded him as Chairman of the Council.

"No one can occupy the position of Chairman of the Council in succession to Dr. William H. Carmalt of New Haven and make a report at this meeting without pausing for a few moments to pay some words of tribute to this great man. Rugged in his honesty, frequently gruff in his actions, oftentimes pronounced in his views and fearless in his enunciation of them, but with it all possessed of the highest ideals and a kindly heart, he has labored amongst us in season and out of season, for these many years, for all that is best in our science and in our art. He has been our grand old man in medicine. Indeed, I know of no one who has made such an indelible impression upon medicine in Connecticut, with the possible exception of Dr. Nathan Smith in the early days of the Yale Medical School."

Dr. Carmalt was well known as an ophthalmologist and otologist before he left New York. He was a charter member of the New York Ophthalmological Society (from which he resigned in 1885), and a charter member of the American Ophthalmological Society, both founded in 1864. He kept his membership in the latter society, regularly attended its meetings until late in life, and was for many years a member of various committees. The high regard in which he was held is shown by the following greetings which were sent him in 1924, beautifully engraved and bound.

"The American Ophthalmological Society upon the occasion of its Sixtieth Anniversary extends to Doctor William Henry Carmalt,



one of its charter members, its cordial good wishes and congratulations. In Doctor Carmalt, the Society recognizes one who for sixty years has upheld its high standards and has contributed materially to the advancement of ophthalmological science which it was founded to promote. The Society accordingly through its Officers and Council has directed that this testimonial be prepared and be presented to Doctor Carmalt as an acknowledgement of his services and a token of its esteem."

In 1928 Dr. Carmalt was made an Honorary Member of this Society.

He was elected to membership in the American Otological Society in 1881. In 1885, only four years after his appointment as Professor of Surgery, he was elected to the American Surgical Association. In this Society he took great pride and was soon active in its affairs, becoming Vice-President in 1895 and President in 1907. Of him and his work in this Association Dr. William J. Mayo says:

"I had met Dr. Carmalt and was slightly acquainted with him previous to my admission to the American Surgical Association in 1899. My Fellowship in this Association brought me into more intimate contact with him and established a friendship which has been one of the inspirations of my scientific life.

"Dr. Carmalt, with his fine scientific imagination, was an inspiring teacher of surgery. He was learned both in the surgery as developed in English-speaking countries and as it is practiced in foreign countries, and he presented with sound judgment not only surgical facts as we understand them, but by a rare gift of description made visible to us the surgical procedures used in other countries and commented on their possible application to improve surgery in America. He recognized that surgical technic must change constantly and that the knowledge of such change could be acquired from the many operators in many countries, but he consistently pointed out that a sound conception of surgery depends on an understanding of the relation of surgical practice to the basic medical sciences.

"Dr. Carmalt was not a prolific writer, but what he wrote was of unusual and lasting value. He was at his best in the discussion of surgical problems, and his long experience and early training made such discussion of the greatest interest.

"In the American Surgical Association Dr. Carmalt played a prominent part, and the Association is greatly indebted to him for its high position in the scientific world. His steadfast effort to develop the ideals of the Association has not been equalled by any other man of my time. To him the Fellows and Officers turned for advice as to action in delicate situations that required careful handling, for the clearness of his mind and his kindly nature fitted him to be a counsellor.

"At the meeting in Washington in 1928, with a keen sense of regret, I missed for the first time the kindly face and pleasant smile of this Nestor of American Surgery, and realized that the infirmities of age must narrow his field of activity, although they did not diminish his mental activity and his sense of values."

Of Dr. Carmalt's published contributions to surgery Dr. Harvey says:

"The contributions of Dr. Carmalt to medical literature reveal his character very clearly and indicate the course of his professional life.

"His first publication (1868), essentially a health problem, upon the epidemiology of "Abortion in Cows" in New York State was carried out, it may be suspected, rather closely under the inspiration, if not direction, of Professor Dalton of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of New York City. This study shows the same patient, thorough search for facts in the observations and in the literature that is revealed at the end of his professional career in a paper on "Heredity and Crime" (1909-10). In both the reasoning is precise and the conclusions conservative but stated without qualification or reservation.

"His period of study in Germany, first in the Institute of Pathology in Vienna under Stricker and then under Waldeyer in Breslau, resulted in two contributions in the German literature. The first of these had to do with the reaction to experimental injury of the cornea of the frog, particularly with respect to the origin of new blood vessels. It is of interest to note that he did not underwrite Stricker's hypothesis of the transition of corneal epithelium into the cellular components of inflammation, but merely stated that the vessels found in the inflammatory tissue arose from preceding elements, differing



in this respect from their formation in the embryo. The outcome of his stay in Waldeyer's laboratory was a study of several instances of carcinoma of the skin in which he demonstrated that the epithelial cell is the essential malignant component of the growth, the connective tissue element being only a secondary reaction. This again was a controversial question of the time and again his conclusions were correct. This paper contributed materially to the differentiation of malignant growths derived from epithelium from those originating in connective tissue. He also observed the ameboid movements of malignant cells, both epithelial and connective tissue, in salt solution in the warm chamber, an observation not repeated until the culture of cells *in vitro*.

"The next contributions, in ophthalmology, after his return to this country, indicate that he had started upon the practice of his profession. At once that mechanical sense which he possessed of the fitness of an instrument for its purpose was indicated by a modification of the Förster perimeter. At later periods other instruments were improved, by reason of which his name became well known in many clinics. Such were a "cannular aural forceps", a curved hemostat, and a tongue forceps, the latter two still common instruments in the operating room.

"Almost immediately he stepped into a controversy, attacking fearlessly the use of the ophthalmoscope as a "cerebroscope", a fad of the moment, and which with an array of authority and by physiologic reasoning he made ridiculous. He shortly was made an examiner for railroad employees in the State of Connecticut at a time when testing for color-blindness was being evaded by the practical railroad man. In an extremely complete and authoritative article showing wide reading and thorough knowledge of the subject he established the necessity of, and gave the methods for examining such employees. At the close he excoriated with no uncertain pen those railroad administrators who were unwilling to make this concession for the public good.

"Meanwhile, Dr. Carmalt had succeeded to the Chair of Surgery, and in 1884 the first of many reports of interesting and important cases, while not contributing anything specifically new, showed that his practice trod closely upon the heels of every advance. Thus in the first report he resected a tongue, wired a patella, and did a subtrochanteric osteotomy under the carbolic spray. The same year,

with the antiseptic method, a bilateral open osteotomy for bow-legs was performed. By 1888 a comprehensive article covering carcinoma of the tongue shows that he had performed this operation successfully four times. In the awakened interest in the surgery of the intestines he took an early interest also, for in 1891 he successfully resected a carcinoma of the cecum doing an end-to-end anastomosis according to the principles then recently described by Halsted and using the aseptic technic which was replacing Listerism. In 1894 he reported 41 cases of appendicitis which he had seen, and included in these the first appendectomy (1892) purposely performed for an attack of appendicitis in the State of Connecticut. This disease was under consideration by a committee of the State Society and his comprehensive and forceful exposition of the situation, differing in no essential way from the present attitude, ended the discussion. The suture of multiple wounds of the intestine, extirpation of the larynx, the restoration of joint function by the maintenance of muscular activity, congenital gigantism of the foot with a Roentgen-ray picture of it in 1898, a discussion of peritonitis, and in 1905, detailed advocacy of early interference in gall-bladder disease showed him extraordinarily close to the current problems of practice.

“More compendious and formal compositions were the section on ‘Septicaemia, Pyaemia and Poisoned Wounds’ in the Dennis System of Surgery (1895) and the presidential addresses before the Connecticut State Medical Society and the American Surgical Association. In the first, his associates in the same volume were Billings, Councilman, Welch, Nancrede, and J. Collins Warren. The article showed extensive reading and familiarity with the foreign as well as the native literature and was made instructive by the free use of illustrative material from his own clinic. In his local state society the discussion was upon “specialism”, and the consideration of it broad and well-balanced with advocacy of the proper degree and kind of specialization in the practice of medicine. The address before the American Surgical Association, made at the end of his active career, was nominally centered about the indebtedness of medicine to surgery, particularly in those changes of which he had been a part, but his eyes were still directed forward to the teaching of pathology more directly and abundantly and to that utilization of hospitals for instruction in clinical medicine, which his own institution, largely as a result of his vision and effort, was shortly to institute.



"Neither in the addresses, though they show much thought and thorough preparation, nor in the miscellaneous papers with their intrinsic evidence of zeal and independent thinking in the problems of his own work, was Dr. Carmalt at his best. It was in the controversial subjects where the public and professional good required that some one of competence speak forth unreservedly that his talent appeared. The case then, was thoroughly prepared, the evidence assembled in detail, the deductions drawn with clearness, and the conclusions so stated that there could be no misunderstanding. His earliest papers indicate this, but the articles on 'Some Limits in the Use of the Ophthalmoscope', 'Color-Blindness', and the 'Consideration of Appendicitis' show him at his best. When these were once presented the controversy was over, the discussion at an end."

When the new Farnam Surgical Building of the New Haven Hospital was completed, Dr. Harvey took Dr. Carmalt through it. It was evident that he was impressed and that he appreciated the added responsibility that more complicated methods of diagnosis and perfect equipment put upon the surgeon, for after returning to Dr. Harvey's office he expressed his admiration for the building and, after meditating a while, said: "Harvey, do you have any deaths?" "Oh yes!" "Ought not to."

The Congress of American Physicians and Surgeons was formed in 1887. It is composed of a number of special societies, membership in which implies distinction in the branches of medicine represented. Dr. Carmalt was a member of three of the constituent associations, and was elected its first secretary and held this office until 1911.

In 1907 Dr. Frank Billings, on behalf of the presidents of the Congress and the presidents of its constituent associations, presented him a silver cup inscribed as follows:

"William H. Carmalt, M.D. In appreciative recognition of faithful and untiring services as Secretary of the Congress of American Physicians and Surgeons from its organization."

In 1907 Dr. Carmalt was elected Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Congress, which office he held until his death. He was unable to attend the last meeting in 1928. That his absence was felt is shown by the message sent to him at the time.

"This Congress was organized in 1887—forty-two years ago. This is the fourteenth session of the Congress and like all the meetings of the past is characterized by evidences of constructive work by all the constituent association members.

"The administration of the Congress has been characterized uniformly by efficient energy and good judgment.

"This standard of administration has been due in a large measure to the first secretary of the Congress, Dr. William Henry Carmalt of New Haven, Connecticut. Dr. Carmalt served as Secretary from 1887 until 1911,—a period of twenty-four years. He was then made\*, and is still, the Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Council. For forty-two years Dr. Carmalt has been an executive officer of the Congress and his work has been always efficient.

"Dr. Carmalt is now in his ninety-third year. Still vigorous mentally, his physical condition does not permit him to attend this Congress—the only one from which he has been absent in forty-one years. We can television this loyal man at his home, unhappy because he can not be with us.

"Therefore, we here in Congress assembled do herewith send Dr. William Henry Carmalt greeting,—our hearty wishes for his health and happiness, with our esteem, our respect and our affection."

Of Dr. Carmalt and his connection with the Congress Dr. Frank Billings says:

"At the Congress of Physicians and Surgeons held in Washington in 1898, just thirty years ago, I had the pleasure of meeting for the first time Dr. William H. Carmalt, Secretary of the Congress.

"I was deeply impressed with the character and personality of many members of the Congress present at that meeting for I was at that time a struggling practitioner from the middle west, and held in awe many of the men of the east I met for the first time at the Congress.

"Among these men of striking personality and character was Dr. Carmalt. As Secretary of the Congress, he had much responsibility which made his manner somewhat abrupt, but at the same time not unkindly. I remember very distinctly his inquiries about my home and my practice, and he seemed to take an interest in me as an individual which was very flattering to me.

"In each subsequent Congress of Physicians and Surgeons it was my pleasure to renew my acquaintance with Dr. Carmalt and I am

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\*He was made Chairman in 1907, also holding the office of Secretary until 1911.



glad to say that in more recent years it has come to my knowledge that our personal regard was mutual.

"In the Congress Dr. Carmalt as an official was always alert and showed a quality of mind which enabled him to dominate the general meetings of the Congress, but always with tact and good taste. With the President of the Congress he was responsible of course, for the program of the general meetings, and these general meetings were striking for the character of the addresses and reports made.

"I have always regretted that our homes were so far separated that I have never been able to cultivate and take advantage of the friendship which I feel has existed between Dr. Carmalt and myself for these many years.

"I think everyone must have been aware of and recognized the strong, commanding character of Dr. Carmalt, fortified always by a rational, well-directed intellect."

Dr. Carmalt's activities were chiefly connected with his profession, but he took as active an interest in many other things as his time allowed. He was a member of the New Haven Chamber of Commerce, of the New Haven Colony Historical Society, and of the Connecticut Academy of Arts and Sciences. He was for many years President of the New Haven Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, and served on the Board of Education from 1888 to 1890. He was a member of The Century Club of New York and until the last few years of his life frequently visited it. On the founding of the Beaumont Medical Club he was made an Honorary Member. He always attended and greatly enjoyed its meetings.

Some of the honors which Dr. Carmalt received in recognition of his services have been mentioned. The one which gave him the greatest pleasure of all came in 1922 with the foundation of the William H. Carmalt Professorship of Surgery in the Yale University School of Medicine.

He was unable to express his appreciation to the donor, for he remains anonymous, but his friends and pupils may here record their satisfaction that the Chair bears the name of Dr. Carmalt, of whom Dr. E. J. McKnight said in 1908: "His name is written on the hearts, the minds and lives of all of us, a high ideal for the present, and for all generations to come", and, in the words of Dr. Harvey, the present incumbent, of one "who in his life exemplified the best traditions of surgery."

Dr. Carmalt was made an Honorary Fellow of the American College of Surgeons in 1925, and a month before his death Yale University conferred on him "as a wise and intrepid leader in the community and in the nation" the degree of Doctor of Laws.

Such is the record of Dr. Carmalt's life and achievements. He lived in a rapidly changing world. He saw the beginning of those epoch-making advances in surgery, the methods of antiseptic and aseptic treatment, and the rapid advance of its whole technic. He was born in the year when regular passenger steamship service to England was started. He came to New Haven two years before the first telephone exchange in the world was established there, and he lived until his doctor's buggy and his faithful Dobbin could no longer be accommodated in the city and the automobile ruled in their stead. His span of life covered the half-century in which the world made a greater advance in material comfort than in the two thousand years before, and he was never "an old-school physician". He kept abreast with all that was new in his profession and in the community life.

It remains to picture the man as he lived among us. For fifty-three years he was a well-known figure who, in the words of President Angell, had "built his life into the very fabric of the community."

For those who did not know him any description would be inadequate. Those who knew him will understand the difficulty of the attempt. It is they, in the words of Jean de Troyes, "whom I humbly entreat to excuse and supply my ignorance, by correcting and altering whatever they find amiss; for abundance of these remarkable accidents have happened after so very different and so strange a manner, that it would have been a very difficult task for me or any other writer, to have given an exact and particular account of everything that happened during so long a period of time."

One of Shakespeare's characters says: "Men should be what they seem." Dr. Carmalt was what he seemed, and those who knew him knew what he was and what he thought. He enjoyed just appreciation, though he often growled when it was given, but was not deceived when praise was unduly fulsome. So now the attempt must be to say of him *nil nisi verum*, for he would have repudiated *nil nisi bonum*.









Dr. Carmalt was of medium height, of stocky build, and his carriage was erect. He was careful of his personal appearance and his bearing gave the impression of strength and perfect health, neither of which qualities he considered necessary to be cultivated in his own case, assuming correctly that they would care for themselves, for he never walked when he could ride, nor stood when he could sit, nor took exercise for its own sake, or for recreation. In any attitude he assumed there was never any suggestion of sluggishness but rather that of activity and energy.

In his talk he was direct and outspoken always; forceful usually; blunt, peppery and pugnacious often; and, on rare occasions, in attacking some objectionable practice or person, brutal. He was never sarcastic and despised vulgarity. He did not need profanity to add picturesqueness, individuality or strength to his speech. Without it, on some occasions when he was the only one who dared to say what ought to be said, his look and his manner gave additional power to his words which struck with the force of a club. For brevity, in argument and in expressing contempt, "Hell!" was sometimes used, and it generally checked useless or irrelevant discussion. On other occasions, though one unacquainted with him would never have suspected it from the tone, "You go to Hell!" might mean what a person less fond of brevity would have expressed by, "I am very grateful for your extremely kind offer, but I cannot allow you to inconvenience yourself on my account." Another not uncommon expression of similar interpretation was "None of your damned business!"

This side of Dr. Carmalt is well expressed in a verse of the poem which Dr. David R. Lyman read to him on his ninetieth birthday.

"You are old," said the youths, "and we hear people say  
 The temper increases with age,  
 Yet you're always as mild as a sweet summer day!  
 Pray how do you smother your rage?"  
 "The true secret of that," Uncle William replied,  
 "Was taught by the Arabs and Moors;  
 But when I first learned it and how it's applied  
 Isn't any damned business of yours!"

And also this, read at a Valentine party at the Graduates Club, ostensibly from a hospital nurse:—

I hate to hear profanity at large  
And ribald tongues make light of sacred things.  
I hate the bubbling blasphemy of fools  
And sacrilegious songs the drunkard sings.

But there are times when ligatures go wrong,  
When a persistent fly clings to the surgeon's nose,  
When the whole hospital turns wrong side up  
And nothing rightly but just wrongly goes.

Then who but you, dear, tender, crusty you,  
Starts all things right as no one other can,  
With one short, crisp, soul-satisfying word,  
One sweeping, all-embracing, world-adjusting  
DAMN.

Dr. Carmalt was as prompt and decided in his opinions and in his judgment of persons as he was in his speech. His convictions on most subjects were firm and without shading. A thing was good or it was bad. There was a right way to do things and all other ways were wrong. A man was worthy or he was worthless. By this sort of judgment he sometimes did injustice and possibly injury to individuals, but his judgment was usually justified before it was expressed and he did not often change his opinion or his estimate of a man. When he did he admitted his error as bluntly as he had expressed his opinion.

If the preceding statements should create the impression that Dr. Carmalt was crabbed and uncouth the picture would be entirely false. In social affairs he was genial and interesting. He was fond of the Graduates Club of which he was for years one of the prominent members, and of which he was President in 1908, 1909, and 1910.

He was considerate of his patients, but was firm in his insistence that his directions be followed. He never adapted his advice to suit their foolish whims, and he had no toleration for fads. With very sick patients he did not spare himself. A lady who had abundant opportunity to observe him says, "With them and children and the aged he was very tender." Part of a letter found among



his papers expresses its writer's opinion of the man. "We see through you perfectly. We know you for a rough, gruff, tender-hearted, sympathetic, self-sacrificing man."

Another man expressed his sentiments by saying: "Your outward kindnesses have been many, but they are swallowed up in my appreciation of the inner well of sympathy of which you have allowed me to taste. It has been a well of inspiration as well as a satisfaction."

In a recent letter to Dr. Harvey, Dr. J. M. Flint, Dr. Carmalt's successor in the Chair of Surgery at the Yale School of Medicine, speaks of Dr. Carmalt as follows: (The first sentence is a reference to the dedication to Dr. Carmalt of Dr. Harvey's book, the *History of Hemostasis*.)

"I am glad you felt like making the official dedication to dear old Bill. Everything that could come to that dear old Roman in the twilight of his long life was richly earned. I was shocked to hear of his death. The degree led me to believe he was still hearty and no one had written that he was failing. His was a fine life. Loyal to himself, to the work he loved, and to his friends to the end. I am coming to feel that this is the greatest and the rarest human trait. If so, additional laurels should adorn his crown."

With his intimates Dr. Carmalt was blunt and he was crusty, but he could roar like a lion or snarl like a tiger with an effect as soothing and tender as that of the cooing of a dove. He was solicitous of his friends and even to the last of his life when any of them were sick he kept careful track of their progress and made them frequent visits.

Dr. Carmalt's later years were years well filled with satisfaction and happiness. The death of Mrs. Carmalt in 1923 was a loss to which he yielded as inevitable, dwelling rather on the thought of their sixty years together. His daughters, Miss Ethel and Miss Geraldine Carmalt, continued to live with him, and his son, Laurence J. Carmalt, lived near by.

He did not allow the loss of an eye from glaucoma in 1917 to influence his activities. Self-pity he did not know. His family did not know that he had any serious trouble until he was ready to have the eye removed. He drove to the hospital, hitched his horse, and, after the operation, insisted that he was going to drive home himself. Unusual diplomacy prevailed on him to stay over night—or did

some friend drive the horse off during the operation? The other eye became affected some years later but the disease was sufficiently controlled for him to read a little until about a year before his death, and for the last two years vision was sufficient for him to see to go about. Driving in his buggy with his wise old horse, Dobbin, he was a familiar figure. Traffic rules meant little to him, partly because of his failing eyesight. An officer of the trolley company instructed each motorman to be ready with his brake whenever Dr. Carmalt was ahead of him for he might turn across the tracks at any moment without signalling. The only complaint he made was of his inability to read. He had always read till late at night and his dislike of having anything done for him made him feel that being read to was putting an unnecessary burden on his daughters. All his life he had insisted on doing things for himself. He was alert and interested in everything and his memory remained astonishingly good until his last illness.

After his retirement from active work he occupied himself with his duties as a member of the Board of Directors of the New Haven Hospital, as Chairman of the Council of the State Medical Society, and as Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Congress of American Physicians and Surgeons. Until a year before his death he attended nearly all meetings of the medical societies to which he belonged and, though most of his contemporaries were gone, he enjoyed meeting his old friends and making new ones in his profession. He was interested in the success of many of his pupils.

On his eightieth birthday, at the suggestion of Colonel Osborn, about twenty of his intimate friends gave him a dinner, and on each succeeding birthday it was repeated until Doctor Verdi, his intimate friend and the favorite among his old pupils, took up the duty of host and continued to give this dinner at his home to Dr. Carmalt and his friends. For a number of years such members of this group as were free dined together at the Graduates Club on Thursday nights, and Dr. Carmalt was invariably present. These birthday dinners, and the informal ones, were a great pleasure to him, and will remain a pleasant memory to all who shared them. In this group the "Bill" of the students was softened a little, and he was addressed as "Uncle Billy".

When he was about eighty he considered buying a car, which he proposed to drive himself, for he would not entertain the idea



of having a chauffeur. Protests from his family finally dissuaded him, in spite of the fact that he had bought and studied a book entitled "The A B C of Automobile Driving". So he got a saddle horse and for the next two or three years rode frequently, and continued to drive in his familiar buggy\* until two or three years before his death, finally giving up the horse because stables disappeared. On his ninetieth birthday, to quote Dr. Lyman again:

"You are old," said the youths, "one would surely suppose  
You'd lost all your fondness for speed,  
Yet they tell us the need for the traffic light rose  
From the pace of your fiery steed."

Dr. Carmalt's characteristics persisted to the end. In his last illness he made no protests, no complaints. At times, when his mind was not quite clear, he could not understand why he was so weak, and was distressed to find himself in bed. He would try to get up, asserting that his whole trouble was laziness, his actions showing determination to overcome it.

President Angell has said that Dr. Carmalt's "unflagging devotion to the promotion of sound and progressive methods in medicine and surgery had justly brought him wide recognition and respect," but his unique individuality, his dominating personality, his fearlessness in the face of authority, and his everlasting sincerity made his "unflagging devotion" effective, and his influence lasting.

Another reason for his great and long-continued influence on the medical profession and on others who came in contact with him has been expressed by three of his distinguished friends in strikingly similar words.

Dr. Frank Billings said: "Carmalt was autocratic, but was able to be, because he was always headed in the right direction."

Dean Smith years ago said: "Carmalt is like the compass. The gist of its history is that it has ever pointed to the pole."

Dr. Bradstreet said: "Whatever may have been the extent of his influence, it has ever been toward the goal."

These are the reasons why Dr. Carmalt so long exerted so great influence; this is why he was respected and admired by his associates;

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\*The New Haven Medical Association's gavel is made from its wood.

this is why he attracted to himself strong men of a younger generation who surrounded him with affectionate attention to the end.

“You are old”, said the youths, “as men measure in years  
But youngest at heart of us all!  
And we love your fine courage, your scorn of all fears,  
Your hatred of shams, great and small.”

JOHN E. LANE



## DR. CARMALT'S PUBLISHED WRITINGS

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2. Report of W. H. Carmalt, M.D., Commissioner for the Investigation of Abortion in Cows. Tr. N. Y. Agricultural Soc. (for 1869) 1870, 29, 55.
3. (With S. Stricker) Über die Neubildung von Blutgefäßen in entzündeten Hornhäuten, Med. Jahrb., 1871, 1, 428.
4. Bemerkungen zur Lehre von der Entwicklung der Carcinome nebst Beobachtungen über die spontane Bewegungsfähigkeit von Geschwulstzellen. Virchow's Arch., 1872, 55, 481.
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7. Dichromatism or Color-blindness. New England M. Month., 1881-2, 1, 10; 51.
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9. Changes in Refraction Resulting from a Blow. Tr. Am. Ophth. Soc., 1883, 3, 579.
10. Cases of Interest:
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  - b. A Case of Unsuccessful Wiring of the Patella for Fracture.
  - c. A Case of Litholapaxy.
  - d. Sub-trochanteric Osteotomy for Vicious Ankylosis of Hip joint; Cure. Proc. Conn. State Med. Soc., n.s., 1884, 3, no. 1, 147, 152, 160, 161.
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12. Leonidas Curtis Vinal (Obituary). Proc. Conn. State Med. Soc., 1886, 3, no. 3, 187.
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16. A Case of Epithelioma of the Internal Ear. Tr. Am. Otol. Soc., 1889, 4, 481.
17. Address on Surgery. Tr. New York State M. A., 1889, 5, 189.
18. Contributions to Ocular Tumors. Tr. Am. Ophth. Soc., 1890, 5, 545.
19. Cancer of Caecum; Excision; End-to-End Union; Recovery. Internat. Clin., 1891, 3, 113.
20. Cancer of the Penis. Internat. Clin., 1891, 1, 138.
21. Cancer of the Tongue; Kocher's Operation; Recovery. Internat. Clin., 1892, 3, 250.
22. Conditions Demanding Excision of the Globe of the Eye. Tr. Am. Surg. A., 1892, 10, 137; idem., Ann. Surg., 1892, 16, 211.
23. The George Bronson Farnam Ward, New Haven Hospital. Yale M. J. 1894-5, 1, 34.

24. Extirpations of the Larynx. Tr. Am. Surg. A., 1894, 12, 267.
25. Five Gunshot Wounds of the Intestine and Mesentery; Laparotomy; Sutures; Recovery. Yale M. J., 1894-5, 1, 100.
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27. Restoration of Joint Functions after Fracture. Tr. Am. Surg. A., 1895, 13, 207; *idem.*, Atlantic Medical Weekly, 1895, 4, 146; *idem.*, Yale M. J., 1894-5, 1, 339.
28. Report of a Case of Appendicitis Presenting some Peculiar and Instructive Features. Yale M. J., 1895-6, 2, 113.
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30. Case of Gigantism of Foot. Yale M. J., 1897-8, 4, 257.
31. The Diagnosis of Peritonitis, Yale M. J., 1899-90, 6, 70.
32. Specialism in Medicine (President's Address). Proc. Conn. State Med. Soc., 1904, p. 117.
33. Early Surgical Interference in Gall-bladder Disease. Med. Brief, 1905, 33, 513. (With portrait of author).
34. Some of the Recent Debts which Medical Science Owes to Surgery (Address of the President). Tr. Am. Surg. A., 1908, 26, 1; *idem.*, Surg. Gynec. and Obst., 1908, 6, 617.
35. Heredity and Crime, A Study in Eugenics. Proc. Conn. State Med. Soc., 1909-10, p. 240.
36. The Necessity for a Public Convenience Station. Report of the Committee on Sanitation and Public Health to the Chamber of Commerce of New Haven. 1915, Oct. 26.
37. The Medical School under Dean Smith and Dean Blumer. Yale Alumni Weekly, 1922, 31, 526, Feb. 17.
38. The Second Half-century of the General Hospital Society of Connecticut; General Hospital Society of Connecticut Centenary, New Haven, 1926.

#### SUMMARY OF DR. CARMALT'S RECORD

Born Friendsville, Pennsylvania, August 3, 1836.  
 M.D., Columbia University, New York, 1861.  
 Interne, St. Luke's Hospital, 1861-2.  
 Clinical Assistant, Assistant Surgeon, Surgeon, New York Eye Infirmary, 1863-1870.  
 Ophthalmic Surgeon to Charity Hospital, New York, 1866-1870.  
 Assistant Commissioner, New York State Agricultural Society, 1867.  
 Commissioner, New York State Agricultural Society, 1868-1870.  
 M.A. (Honorary), Yale University, 1881.  
 Lecturer in Ophthalmology and Otology, 1876-1879.  
 Professor of Ophthalmology and Otology, 1879-1881.  
 Professor, Principles and Practice of Surgery, 1881-1907.  
 Professor Emeritus, 1907-1929.  
 Attending Surgeon, General Hospital Society of Connecticut (New Haven Hospital), 1877-1908.  
 Consulting Surgeon, General Hospital Society of Connecticut, 1908-1929.



Member, Board of Directors, General Hospital Society of Connecticut, 1880-1929.  
 Member, Prudential Committee, General Hospital Society of Connecticut, 1880-1894.  
 President, General Hospital Society of Connecticut, 1919-1920.  
 President, New Haven County Medical Association, 1884-5.  
 Councillor, New Haven County Medical Association, 1910-April 25, 1929.  
 (Resigned).  
 President, New Haven Medical Association, 1888.  
 Honorary Member, New Haven Medical Association, 1928.  
 Vice-president, Connecticut State Medical Society, 1903.  
 President, Connecticut State Medical Society, 1904.  
 Chairman of the Council, Connecticut State Medical Society, 1910-1929.  
 Charter Member, New York Ophthalmological Society, 1864-1885. (Resigned).  
 Charter Member, American Ophthalmological Society, 1864.  
 Honorary Member, American Ophthalmological Society, 1928.  
 Member, American Otological Society, 1881.  
 Member, American Surgical Association, 1885.  
 Vice-president, American Surgical Association, 1895.  
 President, American Surgical Association, 1907.  
 Secretary, Congress of American Physicians and Surgeons, 1888-1911 (from its foundation).  
 Member, Executive Committee of Congress of American Physicians and Surgeons, 1903-1928.  
 Chairman, Executive Committee of Congress of American Physicians and Surgeons, 1907-1928.  
 Honorary Member, New England Surgical Society, 1916.  
 Honorary Member, Beaumont Medical Club, 1920.  
 William H. Carmalt Professorship of Surgery in Yale University School of Medicine, founded 1922.  
 Honorary Fellow, American College of Surgeons, 1925.  
 LL.D., Yale University, June 19, 1929.  
 Died, New Haven, Connecticut, July 17, 1929.  
 Buried, Washington, Connecticut, July 20, 1929.

#### PORTRAITS OF DR. CARMALT

Portrait by George Albert Thompson; owned by Yale University School of Medicine.  
 Portrait by Anna Irving; owned by the Misses Carmalt.  
 Portrait by Herman Van Cott; owned by George Dudley Seymour.  
 Portrait by Eben Comins; owned by The Graduates Club.  
 Bust by Mrs. Henry W. Farnam, Jr., owned by The General Hospital Society of Connecticut.  
 Profile by H. S. Burr; owned by Beaumont Medical Club.

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Numerous photographs, newspaper clippings, references to accounts of Dr. Carmalt, and other items of interest have been collected by the Beaumont Medical Club and are deposited in the Yale University Library.











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